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Preston Wray - Grandma Wray
(Mary Ashire)

Grandma Fugate

Grandpa Fugate

Grandma Filley - Grandpa Filley
(Mary Frances Fugate) (Abel Filley)

My Grandpa Lewis - My Grandma Lewis
(William Lewis) (Nancy Crawford Lewis)

Grandpa Lewis
(George Carly Lewis)

My Grandpa Beach - My Grandma Beach
(Thomas Beach) (Amelia Bartlett)

Grandma Lewis
(Ella Beach)

Grandpa James - Grandma James
(Berry James I) (Olin Filley)

Mother

Daddy

Ella Lavanda James.

Grandmother Wray

Blade--February 6, 1892

A Centenarian

Wednesday Mrs. Mary Wray, better known as "gramma Wray", of this city, attained her 100th birthday anniversary. Such events are not chronicled every day nor every year, and advantage was taken of this occasion by the relatives of the aged lady, to make of it a family reunion. The festivities were held at the home of Mrs. Wray's daughter, Mrs. R. S. Crouch, in the north part of the city, and there were present five generations of the family. Among those present were the sons of Mrs. Wray, the oldest of whom, Mr. Garland Wray, of LaFayette, Ind. is 76 years of age. All are stout and healthy people. A big feast was spread and the day was spent in a manner befitting so important an event.

Mrs. Wray was among the earliest settlers of this vicinity, having lived here over half a century. Her husband, Mr. Preston Wray, died in Indiana before her removal to this place. She was the mother of six children, ^{all} of whom have grown to a good old age. Mrs. Wray's health is remarkably good for one so far advanced in years, and she is able to read fairly well without glasses. She gives her friends a very hearty handshake and is rather too stout for many old friends who call to pay their respects. She evidently enjoys her old age as well as she did her younger days, and apparently has no thought or fear of death. She bids fair to enjoy many more years of life, and the wish is father of the thought among all who know her.

Blade for Friday, July 8, 1893

(with picture)

Mrs. Mary Wray died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. R. S. Crouch in Fairbury last Sunday morning, July 3 at 3 o'clock. The funeral was held at the residence Tuesday afternoon at 3 o'clock, the service being

conducted by Reverend E. S. Wilson.

Miss Mary Ashire was born near Rocky Mount in Franklin County, Va. February 4, 1792. Her father's name was Edward Ashire. She was married in 1813 to Preston Wray, who died 87 years ago. She was the mother of seven children of whom six are living. She lived in Tippecanoe County, Indiana for many years, but for the last 29 years has lived mostly with her daughter Mrs. Richard Crouch.

In an article in 1894, the Blade said of Mrs. Wray "she can see well and can thread a needle without glasses. She has twice taken to glasses and twice regained her sight. Her hearing is fairly good. Her memory is much impaired, and, of course, she is quite aged in appearance. Altogether, she is remarkably well preserved for her age. Last summer she kept house for Mrs. Crouch while Mrs. Crouch went to the world's fair, tending the house plants, cooking the meals etc. and doing it very well. She did not attend the Fair herself, because she has a prejudice against riding on the cars, (trains), considering them dangerous. She will not ride behind horses for the same reason and goes no where that she cannot walk.

At a party given by Mrs. Crouch in honor of her 104th birthday there were present, besides Mrs. Wray, the following of her descendants: Mrs. Richard Crouch, daughter; Miss A. F. Filley and ^{Mrs. (Ellen)} George Westervelt, daughter of Mrs. Crouch and granddaughter of Mrs. Wray; Henderson Fugate and Daniel Fugate, sons of Mrs. Crouch and grandsons of Mrs. Wray; the grandchildren of Mrs. Wray were Mrs. P. C. James and Miss Ruth Filley (now Mrs. N. E. Fulton) daughter of Mrs. A. F. Filley; Willie Fugate, son of Henderson Fugate; Marion, John, Frances and Chloe Fugate, children of Daniel Fugate, and Miss Gertie McDowell, daughter of Mrs. Chloe McDowell, deceased. The great-great grandchildren of Mrs. Wray were Rosamond, Leona and Lois, daughters of Mrs. P. C. James.

4.
Mrs. Richard Crouch, daughter of Mrs. Wray was devoted to her mother during many years and in her last illness was the most affectionate and faithful of nurses.

A Life's Span

Mrs. Wray Wray whose death in her 107th year is recorded in another place, had long been a noted person because of the great age to which she had attained. It is given to few children of earth to live a hundred years, and no other hundred years of the world's history ever made so notable an era in the story of the human race. Not a single year of the hundred that was not more potent of great results than were all the long ages of Methuselah.

Mrs. Wray was born in the last year of Washington's first administration in a mountain county of what was then the frontier of the leading state of the Union. The French Revolution was about to evolve the reign of terror and the world was convulsed with the birth throes of a new era in the history of the race. Kentucky was not yet admitted to the Union, and nearly all the North American Continent was an unconquered wilderness. She lived under the administration of every one of the presidents of the United States. The cotton gin, the steamboat, the railroad, the telegraph, all the modern inventions that have done so much to revolutionize society and change the face of the world were products of the period covered by her lifetime.

When she was born the empire of Spain extended once more than half of the fairest portions of the western hemisphere. The single life of this woman spans the century between the Napoleonic wars that involved Spain's world empire and the war for Cuban liberation that will mark that empire's final extinction.

She was nine years old when Jefferson made the United States a continental power by the purchase of Louisiana. She was married in t

year of Waterloo. She was a young mother when Jackson beat off the British at New Orleans. She saw the passage and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the war of the rebellion that followed, and the final destruction of slavery. She was only fifteen years younger than Henry Clay who lived his great career and died 46 years ago.

In all this world wide drama of war and peace Mrs. Wray bore a simple and faithful woman's part. Her life's work was the common labor of the industrious millions who built with sturdy hands the fabric of the nation's destiny. She walked not among rulers and stood not in the high places of earth. No historian shall write upon the deathless pages the story of her life. Yet it is a story to be proud of. A story of duty done of faithful effort, of rest well earned, and thru it all, hopefulness, contentment, and fidelity.

*Written by Uncle Drew Fulton, who was Editor
of the Blade.*

Grandmother and Grandfather Fugate

I call them grandmother and grandfather Fugate because that is the name I always associate with them, since it was your grandma James who told me these tales.

Grandmother Fugate was born Mary Jane Wray. Her mother, Mary Alshire, was born in Rocky Mount, Virginia, the daughter of Edward Alshire, a native of Holland. These Holland Dutch were considered of a much higher social class than the "German Dutch."

Her father fought in the Revolution and was with Washington at Valley Forge. On that Christmas Eve they found a cow and killed it. The officers took the best, the privates what was left, but they cooked everything. (That story always used to distress you as little girls. You did feel so sorry for that far-off grandfather.)

She married Preston Wray. Nothing, at the present writing is known about his family, for he was disowned, as was she. They must have been cultured and of means, because Preston was sent north for a college education. While there he came under the influence of Phillip Brooks, the great abolitionist preacher, and was converted to his belief. Not only that, but he converted his bride. As was customary, they received slaves from their families as wedding gifts, and these they freed. Shocked by their radical, outspoken beliefs, their families finally cast them off.

For a time he tried to make a living for his family as a cobbler, but they were business pariahs as well as social outcasts. There was nothing left for them to do but to take their little family and go North into free territory. The Indiana Territory was new, and offered promise.

One little daughter was ill during the trip, and Preston trudged along beside the covered wagon, holding her in his arms. He did not live long after they came to their new home, and died leaving his wife and six children.

Grandmother Fugate's first husband was a Mr. Steele from Ohio. They were married in the spring when she was just fifteen. They rode back to his farm in Ohio on one horse, and it rained hard most of the way. He got his crop planted, but took what was known as "quick consumption," and did not live until the harvest. One of her brothers came out and got in the crops for her and then took her back home.

She was a widow for two years, then married William Fugate of Tippecanoe County, Indiana, in 1848, and Mary Frances, grandma James' mother, was born before she was eighteen.

Six years before his marriage ^{William Fugate} he had made a horseback ride through Illinois and Missouri, more than a thousand miles—a true son of pioneer ancestors. His people had come from Western Virginia into Kentucky, (there were Fugates with Lewis and Clarke, and with Daniel Boone), and from there into Indiana.

Years and years later, Grandmother James met a little old lady who had been their neighbor in Indiana. She said that Jane Smithers Fugate was one of the daintiest, loveliest women she had ever known. She was a little woman. She had a lovely home and always kept it so nicely. Like many other pioneer women, she was a doctor, and rode everywhere on horseback caring for the sick and needy.

The father, Josiah Fugate, was very well to do, for those days, and owned land around Concord, Tippecanoe County, Indiana. In his will, dated March 10, 1848, he leaves "all" his property to one son, Rudolph Fugate, so, obviously, his estate was divided before that date, in order that William might take his share to the new Illinois Country. He was the

The old turkey platter that we have used
every Thanksgiving belonged to Grandmother
Fugate. She carried it on her lap as she rode
in the prairie schooner out to Illinois.

only one of the family, then, to go west.

The exact date of their coming is not known, but he was one of the first settlers. He bought 160 acres at fifty dollars an acre in Avoca Township. There was a vast social difference between those who "homesteaded" and those who had paid for their property. The two classes were very clannish and formal in their social activities. Their ^{original} land was entirely unbroken, the greater portion being covered with timber which had to be cleared. It lay on the east side of the river and extended to the Bartlett property.

They had made the trip in an oxcart,* and the first home was a most primitive log cabin there in the woods. The nearest trading post was Pontiac, sixteen miles away, and from there all the necessities had to be obtained. Mail, if any, at that earliest period, was called for at Bloomington.

Flour and corn meal were ground at Ottawa, and the settlers made two trips a year, spring and fall. The wheat they raised was all hauled to Chicago, where they got cash for their crop. The trip took several days, and the neighbors tried to go together. Each driver took two wagons and two teams, one being tied behind the other. They brought back furniture and the luxuries that could not be procured elsewhere.

Every pioneer family had one team that could swim; and the men wanted a saddle horse that swam out of the water so that the rider would not get wet.

In order to cross a high stream, they tied the wagon box to the running gears, so that it would not float off. Then they took the team and wagon to a high point above the ford, and jumped them off--the women stayed in the wagon. The horses swam downstream to the usual ford, and

* Every pioneer covered wagon had a crate of chickens swinging beneath it.